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ABSTRACT

Coordination of post-secondary education institutions means regulation with the aim of developing greater consistancy and overall efficiency, and avoiding overlap of functions and resource waste. Australian coordination plans must balance freedom for academic institutions with the need to be assured these institutions are serving society's needs. Coordination of post-secondary education is essential on four levels: (1) within each sector--the university, the college, and technical and further education; (2) across post-secondary education as a whole; (3) between post-secondary education and other education; and (4) between post-secondary education and employment. Coordination may come from the central government or a special agency. If by special agency, it may be through advisory committees, ministerial departments, or statutory authority. Or, finally, it might come through a statewide multicampus system. Coordinating agencies have previously put most emphasis on short-term planning and management functions, but some authors believe their key function should be long-term planning. When establishing coordinating agencies, problems to be solved include tension between agencies and educational institutions, the difficulty of finding high quality staff, and the tendency for administrative structure to become more important than the educational enterprise itself. (Author/JM)

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ISSUES IN THE CO-ORDINATION OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Paper prepared for the Enquiry into Post-Secondary Education in South Australia

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ISSUES IN THE CO-ORDINATION OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to raise and explore selected key issues concerning the co-ordination of Australian post-secondary education.

Although the responsibilities of this Enquiry relate specifically to South Australia, this paper approaches the problems of co-ordination from a national (though not national government) perspective. This is done deliberately. In view of the current major involvement of both federal and state governments in post-secondary education, the assumption is made that the problems of co-ordination in post-secondary education within any one state cannot be tackled in isolation, and that at least in the first instance it can be of value to approach the problems of co-ordination from a national viewpoint. However, specific reference is made in various places in the paper to the South Australian scene or to possible options to be considered within South Australia.

The term post-secondary education is used here synonomously with the term higher education. It is employed to cover all formal post-school education and related activities carried on in or by educational institutions. Thus the main focus is universities, colleges of advanced education and technical and further education colleges. But as well, on the basis of our definition, we should include evening colleges such as those that operate in New South Wales; adult education activities carried on by government and non-government agencies other than universities, colleges of advanced education (CAEs), technical and further education (TAFE) colleges and agencies; and a number of post-school institutions which offer credit courses (and sometimes non-credit as well) and which at present are not included in the university, CAE or TAFE sectors.[1] In discussing the co-ordination of post-secondary education, there is a

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1 Post-school institutions at present not included by the federal government in university, CAE and TAFE sectors include both government institutions (such as the School of Music and the School of Art in Canberra, the Film and Television School in Sydney, the Darwin Community College, and a number of agricultural colleges operated by state government departments) and non-government institutions (such as church-related teachers colleges and at least one agricultural college).

temptation to think exclusively in terms of those institutions which at present are in the three sectors recognised by the Commonwealth Government for funding purposes and which come under the new Tertiary Education Commission.

The paper generally aims to raise issues and alternatives, rather than to recommend particular administrative arrangements or lines of action. It is not basically concerned with the detail of present arrangements at state and national levels, nor with the current division of responsibilities between federal and state governments.

Co-ordination is a key problem area around which revolve many of the most important practical questions concerning the organisation and control of public post-secondary education systems, and relations between government and universities and colleges. Yet in this country there has been comparatively little informed public discussion and debate of many of the substantive issues, although presumably discussions on these issues have often been held in particular co-ordinating agencies and in some government departments. Sometimes discussions have gone on in universities and colleges, but generally these have been decidedly from the viewpoint of universities and colleges, and often in relation to particular perceived threats to institutional independence.

One problem in exploring the area of co-ordination in Australian post-secondary education is that there is little substantial literature.[2] This is probably not surprising, as at least in some senses the current

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2 The Australian literature to date consists mainly of papers and scripts of public lectures, some of which are extremely thoughtful and useful. The most important of these are P.H. Partridge, 'The University-Government Relationship' in A Report on the Conference on the Role and Responsibilities of Governing Bodies, Australian National University, Canberra, 1969; Sir John Crawford, The University and Government, Robert Garran Memorial Lecture, Canberra, 1969; S.G. Goldstein, 'The Victoria Institute of Colleges - an Inquiry', The Australian Journal of Education, Vol. 13, No. 2, October 1969; Phillip Law, 'Problems in the Co-ordination of CAEs, Universities and Teachers Colleges in Australia', paper presented to section 22, ANZAAS Congress, Brisbane, 1971, and 'Co-operation in Non-University Tertiary Education', The South Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1974; and John Wood, 'Institutes and Colleges of Advanced Education', Australian Journal of Education, Vol. 13, No. 3, October 1969. Material to appear shortly includes B.R. Williams, 'Universities and the Universities Commission' in I.K.F. Birch and D. Smart (eds.), The Commonwealth Government and Education 1964-1975: Political Initiatives and Developments; and Grant Harman, 'National and State Co-ordination of Australian Colleges of Advanced Education', The Australian Journal of Public Administration, and 'Institutional Autonomy in Higher Education: The Case of Australian Colleges of Advanced Education' in Stephen Murray Smith (ed.), Melbourne Studies in Education.

problems of co-ordination are relatively new problems. Certainly two decades ago, when the Murray Committee reported to the federal government, the control and regulation of post-secondary education at both state and national levels was a much simpler business. Post-secondary education was smaller and less complex, and it was hardly meaningful at all to talk of a national system of post-secondary education. In each state except New South Wales, a single university related directly to its state government, while teachers colleges, institutes of technology, technical colleges, agricultural colleges and similar institutions generally came under the direct control of a particular state government department. The federal government had direct responsibility for only two institutions in Canberra (the Australian National University and Canberra University College) and its ad hoc help to the eight operating state universities was distributed on a simple, unsophisticated basis. Moreover, it is less than two decades since the first of our current statutory co-ordinating agencies or their direct predecessors - the Australian Universities Commission[3] - was established, and in most states special statutory authorities for post-secondary education have operated for less than ten years. But while the Australian literature is limited there is available a number of important overseas studies.[4]

The body of the paper is organised as follows. First, some consideration is given to the concept of co-ordination and how this

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3 On the recommendation of the Murray Committee, the federal government in 1959 established the Australian Universities Commission to advise on grants to universities. In the 1940s an earlier Universities Commission had operated, but its responsibilities were much more restricted.

4 The best studies refer to the United States. For example, see Robert O. Berdahl, Statewide Co-ordination of Higher Education, American Council of Education, Washington, 1971; Lyman A. Glenny, Autonomy of Public Colleges: The Challenge of Co-ordination, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1959; John D. Millett, Politics and Higher Education, University of Alabama Press, University, 1975; Lyman A. Glenny and Thomas K. Dalglish, Public Universities, State Agencies, and the Law: Constitutional Autonomy in Decline, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, 1973; and Lyman A. Glenny et al., Co-ordinating Higher Education for the '70s, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, 1971; Leon D. Epstein, Governing the University, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1974; E.G. Palola, T. Lehmann and W.R. Blischke, Higher Education by Design: The Sociology of Planning, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, 1970; and J.G. Paltridge, California's Co-ordinating Council for Higher Education: A Study of Organizational

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concept is used in various contexts. This is followed by a discussion of the arguments for and against government interference and co-ordination of public higher education systems, and of co-ordination and institutional autonomy. Attention is then given to scope and levels of co-ordination, to who should exercise co-ordination, to the functions of co-ordination, and to some practical problems.

WHAT IS CO-ORDINATION?

A useful starting point is the word 'co-ordination' itself. What do we mean by it, and how is it used?

Within the Australian post-secondary education community, and even beyond with regard to post-secondary education, the word co-ordination is frequently used, but seldom defined precisely. People say we need a greater measure of co-ordination or more effective co-ordination, or that we need less co-ordination from the 'centre'. But seldom is any attempt made to say explicitly and clearly what is meant by co-ordination. Possibly it is assumed that we all are talking about the same thing and that there is no need to offer any definition. However, in fact, our thinking on co-ordination is often confused. Further, the term is used by both practitioners and scholars with respect to post-secondary education and other activities in different senses, and beneath what appears to be a simple word there are quite complex problems.

In this paper the term co-ordination is used simply to mean some degree of regulation of the activities of post-secondary education institutions with the aim of developing greater harmony and consistency and a more comprehensive approach, achieving greater overall efficiency and balance, and avoiding unnecessary overlap of functions and wasteful use of scarce resources. This definition will suit the limited purposes of this paper, but there is value at looking at some of the problems in the concept of co-ordination. Among other things, this may help clarify ideas on what is meant by co-ordination with respect to post-secondary education

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4 (cont'd) Growth and Change, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, 1966. On Britain, see Robert O. Berdahl, British Universities and the State, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1959; Graeme C. Moodie and Rowland Eustace, Power and Authority in British Universities, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1974; A.H. Halsey and M.A. Trow, The British Academics, Faber, London, 1971; and T.R. McConnell et al., From Elite to Mass to Universal Higher Education: The British and American Transformation, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, 1973.

in particular contexts, and on what the goals of co-ordination in this area should be, on what functions co-ordination should perform, on who should exercise co-ordination, and on what mechanisms might be appropriate to achieve co-ordination.

The first problem is that while co-ordination is frequently a recognised responsibility of government or of superiors, it may be achieved through interaction by equals. In everyday language, in fact, it is often used in the latter sense. We speak of co-ordination to mean agreement or co-operation between individuals or units in a system or organisation so that they should not work at cross purposes and so that policies should be mutually supportive rather than contradictory. In a persuasive book, Lindblom has argued for a greater emphasis on this kind of co-ordination - on what he terms co-ordination through 'mutual adjustment'.[5] This raises the question of what place there is in post-secondary education in Australia for co-ordination through co-operative self regulation.

Another problem relates to whether in talking about co-ordination we have in mind a process or an end result, or both. Within the field of public administration in Australia, this point has been debated at length. Sir Frederick Wheeler has defined co-ordination as

> ... a harmonious combination of agents and functions towards the production of a result. [6]

But, as Bailey[7] points out, does this mean that when there is a far from harmonious interaction between departments that co-ordination cannot take place? Crisp introduces the idea of harmony in both process and result when he writes that

> Central policy co-ordination is the core and apex of the processes by which the different parts of the machinery of government are drawn and worked together in an orderly fashion relatively to each other with the

cont'd.../

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5 Charles E. Lindblom, The Intelligence of Democracy: Decision Making Through Mutual Adjustment, Free Press, New York, 1965.

6 Sir Frederick Wheeler, 'Some Observations on the Commonwealth Public Service Board as a Co-ordinating Authority', Public Administration, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, March 1967.

7 P. Bailey, 'Co-ordination in Government', Notes from address to Administrative Trainees, March 1970, quoted by M. Forrest, 'Co-ordination: Some Background Material', paper prepared for the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration, 1975.

> object of achieving as high a degree of unity as possible in the formulating and application of the principles by which a government is carried on. [8]

But is harmony in both process and end result required before we can be said to have achieved co-ordination? Bailey puts his emphasis on the end result. Co-ordination, he says, is the 'securing of harmonious (coherent) policies' and for him the acid test of whether co-ordination is achieved is harmonious policy and not the process of achieving.[9] In the co-ordination of post-secondary education are we concerned primarily with the end result, with the process, or with both? I suspect the answer is mainly the end result. But if this is the case, strong arguments can be advanced to show why we should also have some interest in the process, since an enterprise like post-secondary education prospers best when there is a spirit of mutual co-operation between the co-ordinator and the institutions being co-ordinated.

Then there is a problem about goals. To achieve effective co-ordination, is it necessary for there to be a known and agreed goal? Often discussions about co-ordination imply such a requirement. But Lindblom argues that co-ordination can be achieved without ordered rule, central management or dominant common purpose. He writes:

> An American consumer of coffee and a Brazilian suppler are so co-ordinated. The market mechanism is, both within many countries and among them, a large-scale, highly developed process for co-ordinating millions of economically inter-dependent persons without their being deliberately co-ordinated by a central co-ordinator, without rules that assign to each person his position relative to all others, and without a dominant purpose. Market co-ordination is powered by diverse self-interests.[10]

A number of other prominent writers in the field agree. Pressman and Wildavsky, for example, consider that whether or not there is consensus about goals divides thinking about co-ordination into two sharply different and even contradictory conceptions. They write:

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8 L.F. Crisp, 'Central Co-ordination of Commonwealth Policy Making: Roles and Dilemmas of the Prime Minister's Department', Public Administration, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, March 1967.

9 Bailey, op.cit.

10 Lindblom, p. 4.

> Participants in a common enterprise may act in a contradictory fashion because of ignorance; when informed of their place in the scheme of things, they may be expected to behave obediently. If we relax the assumption that a common purpose is involved, however, and admit the possibility (indeed, the likelihood) of conflict over goals, then co-ordination becomes another term for coercion. Since actors A and B disagree with goal C, they can only be 'co-ordinated' by being told what to do and by doing it. Co-ordination thus becomes a form of power.
>
> When one bureaucrat tells another to co-ordinate a policy, he means that it should be cleared with other official participants who have some stake in the matter. This is a way of sharing the blame in case things go wrong (each initial on the documents being another hostage against retribution) and of increasing the predictability of securing each agreement needed for further action. Since other actors cannot be coerced, their consent must be obtained. Bargaining must take place to reconcile the differences, with the end result that the policy may be modified, even to the point of compromising its original purpose. Co-ordination in this sense is another word for consent.
>
> Telling another person to co-ordinate, does not tell him what to do. He does not know whether to coerce or bargain, to exert power or secure consent. [11]

These points raise a number of important questions. For example, is consensus on goals necessary in higher education in order to achieve effective co-ordination? If there is consensus between the co-ordinator and the institutions being co-ordinated, what mechanisms are then appropriate? What place is there for use of means such as information exchange, bargaining, persuasion and coercion? To what extent can a competitive market mechanism be used to achieve co-ordination?

There are other angles that might be considered too. Many definitions of co-ordination stress the need for harmony, consistency and a comprehensive approach. But what do these words mean in concrete terms. For example, does harmony imply agreement without recourse to sanctions? Or again, if we are thinking of managerial co-ordination within the public sector, what is the difference between such co-ordination and control? According to Simon, the purpose of managerial or procedural co-ordination is to 'establish lines of authority and outline the sphere of activity of each organisation member'. [12] With such a purpose, it

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11 Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron B. Wildavsky, Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington are Sacked in Oakland, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1973, pp. 133-134.

12 H. Simon, Administrative Behavior, Free Press, New York, 1965, p.10.

will be necessary to have mechanisms to settle 'jurisdiction disputes'. Thus co-ordination becomes control, or at least something close to it. In some contexts in post-secondary education do we use co-ordination to mean simply control?

This analysis has been limited in its scope. But the essential point which I have tried to make is that some attention to the concept of co-ordination and its various usages may provide help in clarifying thinking about what the Enquiry may wish to achieve through co-ordination in post-secondary education, and about appropriate administrative arrangements and mechanisms to achieve desired goals. Some of the issues raised in this section will be taken up later in the paper.

GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE AND THE DESIRABILITY OF CO-ORDINATION

Two important questions need to be explored before we proceed further. First, what rights have governments to interfere in the operation of public post-secondary educational institutions? Second, what arguments can be advanced for some degree of government co-ordination?

Academics often find repugnant the ideas of government interference in universities and colleges, and of co-ordination. In the United States, according to Epstein, some academics in public universities and colleges hold a 'leave it on the stump philosophy'. They reject

> ...state authority altogether, proposing that the state's elected representatives simply deposit the taxpayers' money, preferably in the amount requested, for the university itself to allocate and spend according to self-generated preferences. [13]

But clearly governments have a legitimate right to exercise some say in the operation of their own public universities and colleges, and some say in the way that the public funds they provide are spent. To question this right altogether, is to question the legitimacy of elected officials and the general authority of the state. Apart from this, there is a clear community expectation that governments will work to ensure that universities and colleges serve society's needs, and that an appropriate range of courses is provided. Further still, in this country

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13 Epstein, p. 19.

governments and particular government agencies have statutory responsibilities to fulfil with regard to the operation of universities and colleges.

But apart from the question of rights, there are some strong functional arguments that can be advanced for some degree of government co-ordination in any system of post-secondary education. As well there are some special arguments that apply to the present Australian context. In the first place, in any system of post-secondary education in which there are great numbers of separate institutions all funded almost entirely from the public purse, decisions about the funds to be allocated to each institution cannot be left entirely to each institution individually. Neither can decisions about the level of funding to groups of institutions be left to those institutions collectively. Most heads of higher education institutions in Australia clearly recognise this; certainly many university Vice-Chancellors have made it clear in their public statements that they do. One Vice-Chancellor, for example, in a public lecture in 1969 said that in his view 'no one can challenge the final right of governments to decide what financial resources can be allocated to the universities as a whole'.[14] He also made it plain that he considered that governments had the right to decide on the allocation of resources between universities. Second, co-ordination is necessary in order to ensure that effective forward planning is undertaken, both for the long-term and the short-term. Such planning is necessary for the system as a whole and for its separate sectors. Planning involves the fixing of goals as well as means to achieve them. Third, co-ordination is necessary to help arrive at priorities between institutions and within institutions. Fourth, co-ordination can provide a means to check on the quality of programmes and the suitability of awards. Co-ordinating authorities can exercise an important role in academic programme development, and also in programme review. Fifth, with rising demands for higher education and increasing costs of providing courses, it is necessary to ensure that limited resources are used to the best advantage and that the least waste and duplication occur. Sixth, co-ordination is desirable to ensure that adequate numbers of student places are provided in different kinds of institutions, at different locations, in different fields and at different levels across the country.

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14 Crawford, op. cit.

This is one aspect of the balance that federal co-ordinating agencies have been required to give attention. Of course, another way to achieve this kind of balance would be to depend largely on market forces, and to fund universities and colleges strictly on the numbers of students they enrol in a competitive situation. But this would probably be unacceptable politically to governments since most likely it would lead to some waste, to unnecessary duplication, and to temporary shortages of places in particular fields. It would also be incompatible with a system of tenure for most academics. At the same time, a degree of controlled competition appears to be desirable in any post-secondary education system. Seventh, through co-ordination it may be possible to achieve a greater measure of diversity of courses and institutions to meet society's diverse needs. Of course, co-ordination often works to enforce uniformity, but this need not be so. One considerable challenge facing governments in Australia today is how to design co-ordinating mechanisms that will work to achieve a desired level of diversity with regard to courses and institutions. Eighth, effective co-ordination may be able to facilitate more easy transfer of students from one institution to another, and closer links between different kinds of higher education institutions, and between higher and secondary education. Ninth, in the current Australian context there seems to be an increasing public expectation that governments will act to deal with the problem of a great number of relatively small institutions, many of which in the short run are unlikely to offer a wide range of courses and facilities.

These arguments are well known, and many people associated with post-secondary education consider that together they provide a strong case for both co-ordination and some degree of government interference At the same time, I submit that the Enquiry will need to consider each of these arguments carefully. A number of questions would seem to demand attention. Are each of the arguments advanced in favour of co-ordination legitimate and convincing? Are there others that the Enquiry would wish to include? In what order would the Enquiry rank these various arguments? By attending to these and related questions the Enquiry will be well on towards deciding what objectives it considers that co-ordination should attempt to achieve. Consideration of objectives is of prime importance. In many respects it is foolish to think seriously about mechanisms and structures until the matter of objectives has received serious attention.

CO-ORDINATION AND INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY

Effective central co-ordination by government agencies will almost inevitably mean some restriction to the freedom of universities and colleges. This brings us to the matter of institutional autonomy - to the other side of the coin of co-ordination.

Institutional autonomy is one of the central concerns of academics in many countries today. University and college staffs generally wish to secure the maximum degree of individual freedom and independence for their institutions, but often they feel that governments are interfering more and more in university and college life and that many traditional forms of freedom are disappearing. For many academics, the idea of institutional autonomy is of pivotal importance in their whole conception of the mission and purpose of higher education. The words institutional autonomy often carry great symbolic importance; frequently they become rallying cries in resisting real or perceived threats of government encroachment on freedoms. For these reasons, the problem of institutional autonomy should be taken seriously.

As the Hurtubise-Rowat[15] report on university and government relations in Canada has demonstrated, the term autonomy in the context of post-secondary education is used with a number of quite different meanings, covering a whole spectrum, from the notion of a state within a state to mere decentralisation within a bureaucratic structure. However, institutional autonomy is used in this paper simply to mean the power of a college or university to govern itself without outside controls.

One problem with the concept of institutional autonomy in relation to higher education is that it is often thought of as an absolute rather than as a relative quality. But, of course, within the public sector there is no such thing as autonomy in any full sense of the word for any university or college. Full autonomy is usually limited by the legislation under which an institution operates, and almost invariably public universities and colleges are dependent on financial support from the public purse and so must accept various restrictions on their actions. Further, autonomy for public institutions is frequently limited indirectly too as a result of decisions made in policy areas other than education. For

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15 The University, Society and Government: Report of the Commission on the Relations between Universities and Government, University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa, 1970.

example, a decision to restrict government expenditure across the board could mean a reduction in support for universities and consequently the forced abandonment or postponement of plans for growth or new academic developments. Thus the situation is that few public universities or colleges, if any in fact, even in the freest and most liberal of countries possess the fullness of autonomy that academic spokesmen in this and other countries sometimes claim for their institutions. In recognition of this, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in the United States in a fairly recent report on college and university governance chose to use the term 'institutional independence' rather than institutional autonomy.[16] However, in this paper the word autonomy is used, mainly because it is so well fixed in the language of higher education.

A second problem with the term institutional autonomy is that there is sometimes confusion over who, or what body in a college or university, possesses the autonomy. Strictly speaking it is probably true that the autonomy so vigorously defended by academics is deposited legally in the governing body, rather than the academic staff. Of course, in practice a large measure of such autonomy is in the hands of academics, since there is a tradition in this country and elsewhere that governing bodies of colleges and universities leave academic decisions entirely or largely to academic bodies.

Most students of higher education agree that universities and tertiary colleges function best when they enjoy a large measure of autonomy. Of course, it is true that individual units in any administrative system within the public or private sectors generally operate more efficiently when they are given a fair degree of control over their own affairs. This is the case whether the unit be a branch within a government department, or a business concern within a group of companies. But a special case can be made out for why a high degree of autonomy is especially desirable for tertiary institutions. First, autonomy can help protect academic freedom and promote a conducive environment for critical inquiry and discovery to take place. Second, a substantial measure of autonomy is desirable on the grounds of efficiency. Universities and colleges are different from other government funded bodies,

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16 Governance of Higher Education: Six Priority Problems, a Report and Recommendations by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1973, p. 17.

and they usually do their job best when they have considerable freedom to plan their own programmes, to recruit their staff and students and to decide on what new lines of development should be followed.

Unfortunately in discussions about relations between higher education and government, academics and others have often failed to distinguish sufficiently clearly between institutional autonomy and academic freedom, and some people have argued that this has worked generally to the disadvantage of academics. Obviously the two concepts are related, and, as we have noted, one of the strongest arguments for institutional autonomy has often been that it is a necessary condition to protect academic freedom. But these two concepts are not synonymous. We have already defined institutional autonomy as the power of a college or university to govern itself without outside controls. Academic freedom can be defined as that freedom of members of the academic community, assembled in colleges and universities, which underlies the effective performance of their functions of teaching, learning, practice of the arts, and research. It is widely recognised as a necessary condition for proper scholarly enquiry, for the critical search for new knowledge and for worthwhile teaching. The idea of academic freedom usually includes notions of freedom of inquiry, of free competition among ideas, free speech and a free press, and toleration of differing legitimate viewpoints. The Robbins' Committee saw academic freedom for the individual scholar as meaning

> the absence of discriminatory treatment on grounds of race, sex, religion and politics; and the right to teach according to his own conception of fact and truth, rather than according to any pre-determined orthodoxy. It involves, further, freedom to publish and, subject to the proper performance of allotted duties, freedom to pursue what personal studies or researches are congenial. [17]

One difficulty for academics explaining to society the rationale for academic freedom is that it requires considerable sophistication to understand the paradox that the university and college sometimes serve society best in social, economic and political spheres by acting as a shield for its critics, even its severe critics.

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17 Higher Education: Report of the Committee Appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins 1961-63, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1963, p. 229.

Institutional autonomy and academic freedom, then, though related are not synonymous. In addition, the one does not always accompany the other, since it is possible in a particular context to have a large measure of academic freedom without a great measure of institutional autonomy, or vice-versa. Indeed, as Sir Eric Ashby and others have pointed out, the connection between institutional autonomy and academic freedom is not a necessary one; 19th century Oxford and Cambridge were autonomous institutions (or at least collections of colleges) which themselves denied academic freedom to some of their scholars, whereas academic freedom thrived in 19th century German universities which, under the control of their respective governments, lacked substantial autonomy.[18] Robert O. Berdahl, in his important book on Statewide Co-ordination of Higher Education in the United States, argues that the cause of academic freedom will be strengthened if it is disengaged somewhat from the question of university autonomy. He writes:

> Academic freedom must be firmly defended whenever and however it is threatened; but institutional autonomy has necessarily and legitimately been reduced by state actions over the past two decades in ways not fully grasped by many people, and here the defence must be more discriminating... Academic freedom as a concept is universal and absolute, whereas autonomy is of necessity parochial and relative, with the specific powers of governments and universities varying not only from place to place but also from time to time.[19]

At the same time, it is probably true that increased government control probably tends to encourage a greater degree of interference in the internal government of universities and colleges, and this may lead to conditions which effectively reduce academic freedom.

The preservation of academic freedom and a substantial degree of institutional autonomy places considerable responsibility on universities and colleges. If tertiary institutions demand and receive a substantial degree of administrative independence and freedom for academics to teach and pursue scholarly inquiry as they see fit, it is not unreasonable for governments and the public to expect that these freedoms will be used responsibly. It is not easy to define responsibility in this

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18 Sir Eric Ashby, Universities: British, Indian, African, Cambridge (Mass.), 1969. See also Lord Bowden, 'The Universities, the Government and the Public Accounts Committee, Minerva, Vol. VI, 1967.

19 Berdahl, pp. 7-8.

context, but it could well include ensuring that resources are efficiently used and that serious efforts are made to ensure that within the limits of available resources the legitimate educational needs of the society and its individuals are being adequately met. It could also mean that institutions recognise an obligation to ensure that individual academics do not use their individual freedom in such a way as to bring tertiary teaching and scholarship into disrepute.

Of course, institutional autonomy in post-secondary education has traditionally been thought of in relation to universities and to similar kinds of institutions. But in our system of higher education universities constitute only one sector. This brings us to ask what measure of autonomy is appropriate for CAEs and TAFE colleges. Should all degree granting institutions have a similar measure of independence? In the CAE sector the Federal government has pressed for teachers colleges to be independent of state government departments and to be controlled by their own councils. Is such a policy likely to be followed for TAFE colleges and would it be desirable? These are difficult questions that demand answers. Already in CAEs there is a strong feeling that all institutions teaching degree and post-graduate courses should enjoy a similar degree of independence.

Sometimes the major problem in the government of public higher education systems is thought of as reconciling the conflict and tension between co-ordination and institutional autonomy. In some respects, however, it is more helpful to think of it as a problem of achieving balance between two necessities: the necessity for freedom for academic institutions, and the necessity that they should serve society's needs and that scarce resources should be used to maximum advantage. Thus the real issues become the extent to which government interference should go, whether such interference is confined to proper topics, and whether it is expressed through a suitably sensitive mechanism. These issues, as the Robbins' Committee commented, are matters of 'great difficulty and delicacy'.[20]

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20 Higher Education, p. 228.

SCOPE AND LEVELS OF CO-ORDINATION

If we accept for a moment the current education/political structure and context of Australian post-secondary education, two important questions need to be asked with regard to scope and levels of co-ordination. First, what different groups of institutions and activities it is desirable to attempt to co-ordinate? Second, at what different levels should co-ordination operate?

With regard to the first question, I suggest four distinct varieties or spans of co-ordination are required; briefly these are as follows:

(a) Co-ordination of each of the three sectors of post-secondary education

Clearly this is necessary. Mechanisms are required to plan effectively within sectors, to decide on the siting of new institutions, to allocate resources to institutions and to programmes, to help develop new programmes and in some cases review these. On the whole, our present machinery has the potential to handle this type of co-ordination reasonably well. At the federal level the new Tertiary Education Commission has three statutory councils, one for universities, one for advanced education, and one for TAFE. At state level, there is now a statutory authority in each state with responsibility to co-ordinate advanced education, while TAFE activities generally come under the control of a separate government department or division of the state education department. However, there are still some obvious weaknesses in the present arrangements at state level. First, only in two states is there a statutory agency for co-ordination of the universities; these states are Western Australia and New South Wales. In the other states some have advisory committees with some responsibility for the universities, but in others there is no machinery at all for university co-ordination. Second, in Victoria and New South Wales TAFE activities come under the control of two or more government departments or agencies. In these states it appears that more effective co-ordination between these authorities is desirable.

(b) Co-ordination of post-secondary education as a whole

As well as requiring machinery to deal with each sector, we need machinery to plan for post-secondary education as a whole, to decide on balance between sectors, and the allocation of resources to each,

and to deal with boundary problems and possible duplication of facilities and ensure that each sector is getting a 'fair go' vis a vis the other two sectors. At present some people in advanced education claim that the CAE sector is relatively disadvantaged because of slow course accreditation procedures, and that consequently on occasions universities or TAFE colleges, which can often respond more quickly, beat them in the race to enter a new programme area.

Our current machinery is less well-equipped to provide this kind of overall co-ordination for higher education. As we have already noted, the Commonwealth Government has just established the Tertiary Education Commission with responsibilities for the whole of post-secondary education, but most state governments still do not have similar statutory agencies.[21]

Ideally overall co-ordination of higher education should include all institutions and activities, at least in the public sector. This raises the question of what best might be done with regard to institutions like the Darwin Community College, and the School of Music and the School of Art in Canberra. There is also the issue of how adult education outside the three sectors could be linked more effectively with universities, CAEs and TAFE colleges. Of course, this is not to say that all adult education should come under the same co-ordinating agencies which at present take responsibilities for the three sectors, and be treated in a similar fashion with regard to funding and forward planning. But some more effective links seem desirable.

(c) Co-ordination of post-secondary education and other education

On the whole this is not well done. Yet clearly it is desirable that in some senses formal education at all levels be seen as part of the one activity and process, and particularly that much more effective links be forged between higher education on the one hand and secondary education on the other.

The Commonwealth Government is much better equipped than state governments to handle the problems of co-ordination of its post-secondary education activities with its other education activities. Yet it is

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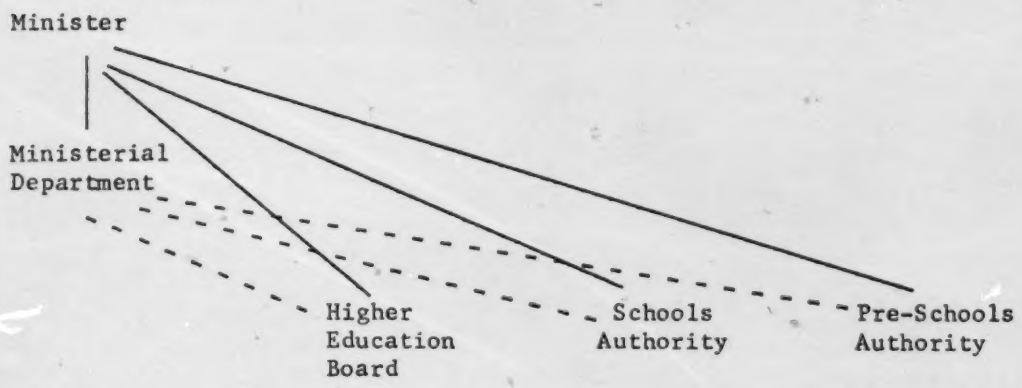
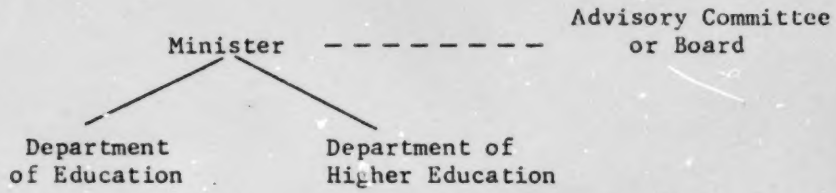
21 Western Australia is the only state with a statutory co-ordinating agency with responsibility for all post-secondary education. The New South Wales Higher Education Board has responsibilities for universities and CAEs but not TAFE. A couple of states now have advisory committees with responsibilities for all post-secondary education but to date these have been largely ineffective.

the state governments which have the formal constitutional responsibility for education and which (apart from in the territories) actually own and operate the public education institutions and provide the educational services. Technically in most states the education departments have some responsibility for overall co-ordination and for providing advice. Yet in most cases the expertise of senior officers of education departments relates mainly to primary and secondary education, and most of these current arrangements were designed for a situation in which post-secondary education was much smaller and less important. This raises the vital issue of what kind of arrangement might be appropriate at state level to meet current needs of overall co-ordination more adequately. My own preference would be for a small ministerial department with responsibilities for education policy and co-ordination at all levels, and for a number of statutory agencies taking responsibility for the detailed co-ordination and/or operation of institutions of particular kinds or at particular levels. With this scheme a possible structure might be as follows:



Another scheme would be to have one or more ministerial departments, or a ministerial department plus statutory authorities, (each with responsibility for a particular area or level of education) and as well to have a statutory committee or board responsible to the minister and charged with providing advice on overall co-ordination. Under this pattern the structure might be as follows:



(d) Co-ordination of post-secondary education and employment and training

Here I do not have particular suggestions in mind, but it seems desirable that more effective links, at least for information exchange, be developed between higher education systems and individual institutions on the one hand, and employers, professional bodies, employment agencies, apprenticeship boards, and those responsible for training programmes in industry on the other.

One issue that needs to be faced concerns the range of activities and institutions that any co-ordinating agency can span. Do we need at least four different agencies at each level of government to take responsibility for the four different kinds of co-ordination listed, or could some agencies deal effectively with two or more kinds? We seem to be moving towards agencies with broader responsibilities, although there is sometimes concern that this will result in the detailed problems of particular sectors or groups of institutions receiving less sympathetic and understanding attention than in the past (e.g. the fear of the universities that a combined federal commission would damage the special relationship that had been built up over a period between universities and the Universities Commission). The structure devised for the new Tertiary Education Commission appears to be one novel way of moving to an organisation with wider responsibilities, yet still the capacity to deal expertly with particular sectors.

With regard to the second question, under the present circumstances clearly it is necessary to have effective co-ordination at both federal and state levels. But this does not mean that identical functions should be performed at each level. Ideally federal and state machinery should be complementary. It should mesh well together (this probably means that for higher education it would be helpful if state governments were to establish agencies to parallel the new federal Tertiary Education Commission), and wherever possible there should be a rationalisation

of function. Perhaps a sensible arrangement with regard to higher education would be for the federal government increasingly to take the lead in setting broad objectives, in looking at questions of balance and overall national needs, and in developing measures to overcome perceived major weaknesses, and for the states to take the main responsibility for detail - for forward planning and the siting of new institutions, for course development, approval and accreditation, for student transfer and so on. Unfortunately at the present time it appears that there may be quite a deal of unnecessary duplication between federal and state authorities, and that we may already have too many different levels of co-ordination, resulting in unnecessary delays in decision-making. The ideal structure for co-ordination is one that is relatively simple, that can make decisions quickly and inform institutions of why they were made, and that can establish close relations with their immediate clients.

As well as federal and state co-ordination, some regional co-ordination of education, or of education and employment, may be both desirable and feasible. One possibility is the establishment of statutory regional education advisory councils, with the power to investigate, advise the minister and publicly report, but not to take independent action. These councils could bring together representatives of higher, secondary, primary, and pre-school education, employers, and employment agencies with the aim of promoting more effective liaison between institutions and interests, of avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort, and of making public education serve better the needs of particular regions.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CO-ORDINATION

Who should have responsibility for the various types and levels of post-secondary education co-ordination we have already discussed? Perhaps the simplest way to deal with this question is to break it down into a number of options. Briefly the main options appear to be:

(a) Government co-ordination, or self-regulation by institutions?

The major responsibility for co-ordination in higher education in the current context must obviously rest with governments. But at the same time, self-regulation or self-imposed discipline should not be ruled out of hand entirely. The report of the Royal Commission on Australian

Government Administration commented with respect to co-ordination generally:

> Discipline can be either voluntarily accepted or externally imposed. In our view, externally imposed discipline often tends to be ineffective because it withdraws responsibility from all except the source of discipline itself. It depends therefore for its effectiveness finally on the knowledge that there is a coercive power which that source can exercise. It tends to place the interest of the part above that of the whole, and often produces tension and incipient revolt, and may in critical times break down altogether. On the other hand voluntarily accepted discipline is for other reasons equally difficult to achieve... But if voluntary acceptance can be achieved, this form of discipline is by far the more effective.[22]

Higher education appears to be a field which lends itself readily to some degree of self-regulation. For example, in the United States accreditation is largely in the hands of non-government organisations. Further, higher education offers possibilities for co-ordination through co-operation between government agencies and higher education institutions. Already significant steps in this direction have been achieved in Australia. As a reaction to questionnaires distributed to universities in 1967, the universities lodged strong objections to the Universities Commission. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee was stimulated to make further submissions to the Commission on the need to provide sensible questionnaires and to co-ordinate the statistical requirements of the Commission and the Commonwealth Statistician. The AVCC pressed for common definitions and common forms and a single reference date for all statistical returns, to avoid needless waste of labour and statistical confusion. Following consultations with the Commission, this was achieved by 1970 and in 1974 the Commission became the agent of the Commonwealth Statistician for the collection of university statistics.[23] Or, to take another example, in recent years AVCC working parties have co-operated with the Universities Commission on matters such as building procedures, triennial questionnaires, and annual statistics.[24] Or to take still a further example, in advanced education academic staff from colleges often serve on committees of state boards.

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22 Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration: Report, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1976, p. 356.

23 Williams, 'Universities and the Australian Universities Commission', pp. 124-5.

24 Ibid., p. 125.

This line of development seems a highly desirable one and hopefully it will be fostered. It offers the possibility of building closer relations between co-ordinating agencies and institutions and a spirit of greater mutual trust and co-operation.

(b) Central government co-ordination, or co-ordination by special agencies?

We have already seen that there is a need for special co-ordinating agencies for higher education. At the same time, central departments and agencies in government will inevitably play some role in co-ordination of higher education. At the federal level, such departments and agencies include the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Finance, the Department of Education, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Public Service Board. But the substantial issue here that needs to be considered is what a desirable balance between central departments and special higher education appears to be. Many people in higher education believe that over the past twelve or eighteen months the balance has moved substantially from the commissions towards central departments, and that this is not in the best interests of higher education.

(c) Non-statutory advisory committees, ministerial departments or statutory authorities?

A special government co-ordinating agency for post-secondary education may take the form of a ministerial department, a statutory authority, or a non-statutory advisory committee.

The non-statutory advisory committee has been used at both federal and state levels with respect to post-secondary education. For example, the Federal Government's role in advanced education was co-ordinated for the first six years by an advisory committee chaired by Sir Ian Wark. Under this arrangement, the committee technically did not have its own separate secretariat, but was serviced first by the Prime Minister's Department and later the Department of Education and Science. And even at the present time, advisory committees in one form or other operate in a number of the states. Overall in the Australian context the advisory committee is a suitable device to provide recommendations to governments on a limited range of topics. But once a committee is required to take on a substantial burden of providing advice on a regular basis, and often

a substantial administrative load as well, the statutory authority or the ministerial department is generally thought to be a more appropriate device.

To date the statutory authority has been preferred in this country both at federal and state levels over the ministerial department for the co-ordination of post-secondary education.[25] This is probably partly a reflection of a general Australian enthusiasm for statutory authorities and a tendency for governments at both state and federal levels over recent years to create commissions or boards rather than additional departments to carry out new or enlarged administrative functions. But apart from this, the statutory authority is thought to have a number of advantages. In particular, it is said to be more independent of a minister and government than a traditional department. Hence it is less likely to be drawn into day-to-day party political disputes, and more likely to be able to undertake effective long-term planning. Being more independent, it is argued, a statutory authority is not necessarily bound by all the regulations and restrictions which apply to departments, and unlike a department a board or commission on occasions can publicly take a stand which is critical of government policy. Moreover, it is also claimed, that being more independent the statutory authority can act as a 'buffer' between government on the one hand and universities and colleges on the other. The buffer notion has been most popular with regard to university co-ordination. It includes the idea that governments need not directly interfere in the affairs of universities, while universities need not directly deal with government; the board or commission acts as a buffer between them, explaining and defending one side to the other, and vice versa. It appears the buffer idea was

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25 The term 'statutory authority' is used here in its colloquial sense. Strictly speaking the term refers to any public authority created by statute, and hence would apply even to some ministerial departments. Here, however, it is used to refer to statutory agencies of a non-departmental character, and in this sense the term is more or less synonymous with the term 'statutory corporation', which is more commonly used within the discipline of public administration. For a useful discussion of statutory authorities and departments, see R.L. Wettenhall, ' Fitting into the Framework of Government' in G.S. Harman and C. Selby Smith (eds.), Designing a New Education Authority, Education Research Unit, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra, 1973, pp. 148-197; A.W. Macmahon, Delegation and Autonomy, Asia, London, 1961; symposium on 'Government Department or Statutory Authority?', Public Administration, Vol. 27, December 1968; and L.C. Webb 'Freedom and the Public Corporation', Public Administration, Vol. 13, June 1954.

borrowed from British experience with the University Grants Committee.[26] Then, too, with a collegial structure at the top the statutory authority is said to provide the opportunity to bring in talent and expertise not regularly available in public services. An associated argument is that, with university and/or college representation on boards and commissions, their decisions are more acceptable to institutions.

These various claims in favour of the statutory authority over the department need careful scrutiny. For example, it is by no means clear that our various commissions and boards in post-secondary education are in fact as independent as is sometimes imagined. Statutory authorities are not automatically more independent of government interference and public service regulations than departments. Some have a high degree of independence, while others operate in essentially the same way as any department. The degree of independence enjoyed by a statutory authority depends in the first place on the provisions set out in the act under which it operates. But as well it depends on the status and power of the individual members of the authority (and particularly its chairman and/or executive head), on their willingness to take an independent line and if necessary even disagree with or criticise government policy, and on broad community attitudes about what is appropriate behaviour for statutory authorities in general, and sometimes for particular statutory authorities, or authorities with responsibilities in particular areas. Then, too, to take a related matter, some people would say that the buffer notion is now largely a myth. Certainly at federal level the Commonwealth Government does not impose its will directly on institutions, but it does so through the Tertiary Education Commission. Under the current system of guidelines the Commission is informed of the amounts of funds available for each sector for the coming year, and it is also told what overall conditions it is to impose on institutions with regard to enrolments. But at the same time, the Commission can to some extent cushion the Government's impact on institutions and it can try to persuade the Government to modify particular proposals. Further, although its independence is limited, from the point of view of institutions, there is value in the Commission and its three councils including part-time members, drawn from

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26 There is good evidence to demonstrate that Australian thinking on co-ordination in higher education has been substantially influenced by U.K. experience. Indeed it was Sir Keith Murray, then Chairman of the British University Grants Committee, who chaired the committee which recommended in 1957 establishment of a special federal co-ordinating agency for universities.

the community and post-secondary institutions. Because of the expertise and high status of these part-time members, it is likely that governments may take more notice on particular matters of the advice of the Commission than of a department. Further, if necessary the Commission or its individual members may speak out to defend post-secondary education. The various universities and colleges see this aspect as an important safeguard. Related to this is the fact that possibly co-ordination would have been resisted more initially if departments rather than boards or commissions had been adopted.

The ministerial department is not without its advantages. For example, it is said to often provide for easier and more direct access to ministers, and for more rapid decision-making (delays waiting for meetings of boards to ratify decisions are avoided). Unlike the statutory authority, all senior people give their full-time attention to the enterprise. Apart from this, the ministerial department provides for easier overall co-ordination in government; as Wettenhall says, 'the more we use statutory authorities the harder it is to ensure the harmony of governmental operations as a whole'.[27] Further, it is interesting to note that Canadian experience has differed from ours; today in a number of Canadian provinces the co-ordination of higher education is in the hands of a Department of Universities or Colleges, rather than a board or commission.

Now that our present structures and arrangements are under review, it seems sensible to suggest consideration of whether the advisory committee, statutory authority or ministerial department best suit particular needs. We could well look closely at the advantages and disadvantages of each structure. As well, it could be helpful to think in terms of a wider range of possible arrangements still. In this discussion we have tended to present statutory authorities and departments as a clear-cut alternative. However, in practice both statutory authorities and departments differ greatly among themselves on a range of dimensions. Thus not only should we ask whether an advisory committee, statutory authority or department is the appropriate structure for a particular case, but also what form it should take.

(d) Special co-ordinating agencies, or state-wide multi-campus systems?

A complete or partial alternative to the special co-ordinating

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27 Wettenhall, p. 163.

agency for post-secondary education, whether it be an advisory committee, statutory authority, or department, is the mechanism of a state-wide multi-campus arrangement.

The multi-campus idea is not foreign to this country, and over the years in both university and CAE sectors a number of variations of this idea have been in use. Also in some respects the present arrangements for the TAFE sector come close to the multi-campus idea. In the university sector, Canberra University College for many years was linked to the University of Melbourne, while the University of New England, the University of Newcastle, the University of Wollongong, and James Cook University all began as university colleges linked to a parent university. In the college sector, for example, both the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the South Australian Institute of Technology have country branch campuses. Further, in some senses both the SCV and VIC systems in Victoria have some characteristics of a multi-campus institution.

At the same time, Australian experience with multi-campus institutions has been limited. Almost without exception, it has been along the lines of one institution operating from two or more sites or of the branch or satellite campus of a main campus. Experience demonstrates that the latter model works well in the long-term only in exceptional cases.

The state-wide multi-campus notion is a different one. Basically it is formed by combining in the one institution all or a substantial number of separate institutions across a state. Each institution then becomes a campus of the new institution and it has its own executive head, and over all the campuses there is established a central administration with its own executive head, who does also double as the executive head of any of the separate campuses.

This pattern has been employed in a number of countries, but it is now by far the most highly developed in the United States where today over 75 per cent of students attending public colleges and universities are enrolled in multi-campus institutions. In many American states, within the space of two decades or less, co-ordination has passed through a number of consecutive stages - voluntary co-ordinating board, statutory co-ordinating board, multi-campus system or systems (often simultaneously with a small statutory board). Perhaps the two best

known examples of multi-campus systems are the University of California and the State University of New York. The University of California has ten campuses, each headed by a Chancellor. Two of the campuses (Berkeley and Los Angeles) are major research universities, two others specialise respectively in medical and agricultural education, while the other six are general purpose. The central administration, headed by the President, is in Berkeley, across the road from but significantly not part of the Berkeley campus. Unlike the University of California, the State University of New York is truly comprehensive in terms of levels, and includes university centres, four-year colleges and community colleges.[28]

In the current Australian context the state-wide multi-campus idea appears to offer the best possibilities in the CAE and TAFE sectors. Let us take South Australia as an example. It could make sense to combine all CAEs (or all with the exception of SAIT) into one multi-campus college, and in time develop the TAFE colleges in a similar way. Within each of these sectors, co-ordination would then become an internal college matter. The central administration and council for each could take responsibility for forward planning, financial allocation between campuses, new course development and external relations, especially with government. It may also be possible for course accreditation within advanced education to become an internal college matter, in the hands of the central administration. If staff contracts were made with the whole college rather than with individual campuses, rationalisation from time time would be simpler; when necessary, staff could be asked to move from one campus to another in order to consolidate work in declining fields on a single campus. The overall co-ordination of higher education would become much simpler; it would be necessary simply to co-ordinate two universities, a multi-campus CAE and a multi-campus TAFE institution. Thus the structural arrangements could look something like the following:

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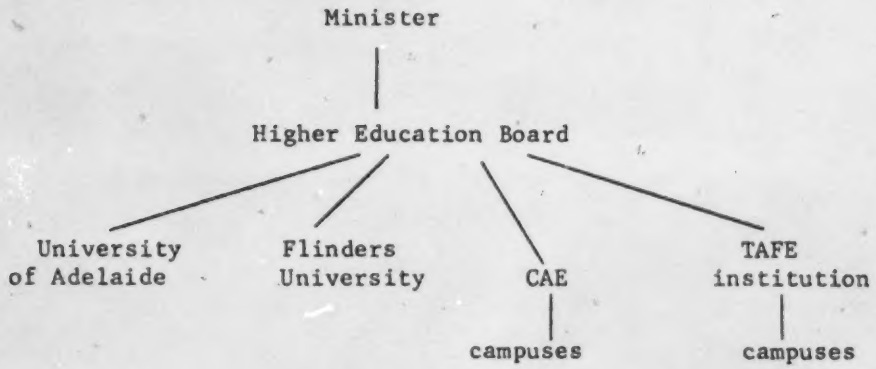
28 The best study of multi-campus institutions in the United States is Eugene C. Lee and Frank M. Bowen, The Multi-campus University: A Study of Academic Governance. A Report Prepared for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, Macmillan, New York, 1971. See also Eugene C. Lee and Frank M. Bowen, Managing Multi-campus Systems: Effective Administration in an Unsteady State, Jossey Bass, San Francisco, 1975.



Of course, there are a number of possible variations of this. The SAIT, for example, could remain a separate institution, parallel to the two universities, or it may be sensible to combine both CAEs and TAFE colleges into the one multi-campus institution.

We have already hinted at some of the advantages with this pattern. Briefly it offers the possibility of more effective long-range planning, the more effective promotion of diversity, the advantages of concentrating external relations, development of better management practices, more effective shared use of facilities, and greater flexibility with regard to the movement of staff, students and programmes from one site to another. But there are some potential disadvantages - an extra layer of management, a council further removed from campuses and students, and loss of some measure of independence by campuses. Of course, in practice it would depend on the particular structure set up, and on the distribution of power between the central administration and campuses.

(e) Commissions of experts, or of community representatives?

We have already noted that statutory authorities may differ greatly among themselves on a number of dimensions. Of those statutory authorities concerned specially with post-secondary education, one important difference relates to membership of the governing council or board. In brief, this can be expressed as an alternative between a board or commission made up largely or entirely of experts, or one drawn largely or entirely from community representation in a broad sense, although in fact there are a wide range of possibilities with regard to membership composition.

Representation of experts from universities and colleges may provide a co-ordinating body with important skills and knowledge (e.g. detailed information on institutions being co-ordinated and their programmes,

informed judgment on academic proposals, knowledge about the organisation of post-secondary education in other countries, and information on how proposed policies might be accepted by academics). The inclusion of university or college members on a co-ordinating authority usually tends to increase the level of confidence of academics in that authority, and on occasions it may help to make unpopular policies more acceptable on campuses. Representation of public servants brings different but still valuable expertise, and also encourages governments to place greater confidence in the recommendations of the commission or board concerned. Represenration of community people - employers, union officials, people prominent in cultural or artistic fields, members of professions or professional associations - also brings expertise, but again of a different kind to that provided by academics and public servants. But as well, such representation can serve other objectives; for example, it can provide a channel for community opinions, a link with employment, a desirable balance to academics and professionals, and a sounding board for academics and professionals to try out possible policies.

The actual composition and size of the various co-ordinating authorities for post-secondary education that have operated over the past decade has varied markedly. This is demonstrated clearly in the accompanying table,[29] which sets out the membership composition in 1974 of those co-ordinating agencies with responsibilities for advanced education.

From this table it will be noted that the size of authorities varied from 9 to 31 members. In composition the most sharp differences related to whether or not college principals, college academic staff, and college council members were included, and whether or not representation was provided for members of parliament. For those authorities with responsibilities solely for advanced education (i.e., all with the exception of the Western Australian Tertiary Education Commission) the proportion of the part-time members from outside CAEs varied between 63 per cent and 84 per cent.

What is the desirable balance between academic, government and community representation, and what is the best size for a commission or board with respect to the number of members? There are no simple answers to the questions.

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29 This table is reproduced from G.S. Harman and C. Selby Smith, Some Current Trends and Issues in the Governance of Australian Colleges of Advanced Education', The Australian Journal of Advanced Education, No. 20, No. 2, June 1976, p. 141.

TABLE

Composition of Co-ordinating Authorities Concerned with Advanced Education, 1974

	Number in Each Category						
	Qld BAE	NSW AEB	VIC	VIC SCV	SA BAE	WA TEC	Comm Adv.Ed.
Chairman, Dep.Ch.	1	2	3	3	2	1	2
College principals	2	-	2	4	3	3	1
College academic staff	-	-	2	3	2	-	1
College council members	-	-	1	2	-	-	-
Public servants	4	4	3	5	2	3	-
Members of Parliament	-	-	3	3	-	-	-
Industry, professions	3	4	10	3	4	2	3
University	2	1	4	3	2	-	2
Other	1	-	3	4	1	-	1
Total	13	11	31	30	16	9	10

Notes:

1. This table was compiled from records held by the Commission on Advanced Education. At the time it is possible some positions were vacant.
2. The category 'Chairman, Dep.Ch.' includes other full-time officers such as deputy chairman, registrar, secretary. The term 'Public servants' includes employees of other statutory authorities.
3. In the case of South Australia, the three principals include a nominee of the Director of SAIT.
4. In the case of the Western Australian Tertiary Education Commission the category 'Principals' refers to heads of institutions.
5. The abbreviations used above are as follows:

Qld BAE	Queensland Board of Advanced Education
NSW AEB	New South Wales Advanced Education Board
VIC	Victoria Institute of Colleges
SCV	State College of Victoria
SA BAE	South Australian Board of Advanced Education
WA TEC	Western Australian Tertiary Education Commission
Comm Adv Ed	Commission on Advanced Education

It is clear, however, that the way in which different agencies work and their degree of acceptance by governments, by colleges and universities and by the community are influenced to a substantial degree by their membership size and composition. As a result any substantial changes are likely to produce important operational consequences. For example, an increase in representation of senior public servants would probably tend to draw a board closer to government and other government departments and agencies, and possibly bring useful additional expertise and information, but it would in all probability reduce its acceptance with academic staff in the colleges or universities. Or again, a board controlled entirely by lay members may tend to win the confidence of governments more easily, but it would probably be treated with scepticism and even hostility by university and academics and administrators, and, to operate effectively, it would have to depend heavily on the advice of professional staff.

In the United States research indicates a relationship between membership composition and the legal powers of state co-ordinating boards. According to Glenny:

> The amount of legal power the board will have over the institutions will be determined primarily by the composition of the board, whether it is composed of a majority of public members or a majority of members with a direct stake in collegiate institutions. Boards controlled by public members tend to have final authority over important educational policies; those controlled by collegiate members tend to have advisory powers only. [30]

No one has yet investigated whether a relationship along these lines exists in this country with regard to federal and state co-ordinating agencies for post-secondary education. One problem is that we do not have the sharp differences in membership composition between boards of academics and boards of community leaders as found in the United States. It is possible, however, that some governments in this country have been prepared to give substantial powers to agencies only on the condition that college or university representatives do not constitute a majority of members.

It is not possible here to spell out the various consequences that may flow from different sizes and membership compositions. However, three

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30 Lyman A. Glenny, 'State Systems and Plans for Higher Education' in Logan Wilson (ed.), Emerging Patterns in American Higher Education, American Council on Higher Education, Washington, 1965, p. 2.

points need to be made. First, ideally the number of members on a board or commission should be sufficient to provide for some variety of interests to be represented and for a range of different perspectives and expertise to be available. If the statutory authority model is chosen for a co-ordinating agency, it seems sensible to capitalise on the potential strengths of this model - greater independence, ability to bring a range of viewpoints and experience to decision making, and a means of decision making likely to gain fair acceptance both from government and academics. Perhaps the least satisfactory statutory authority model for post-secondary education co-ordination would be the single member authority i.e. the single full-time commissioner. Under such an arrangement few if any of the potential advantages of the statutory authority would be realised, and there would be a high probability of the commissioner being fairly readily manipulated by government. Second, in general smaller authorities (of say six to twelve members) tend to operate in a more informal fashion, while larger authorities tend to require more formal meeting procedures and to depend more on sub-committees and professional staff. Third, there is some division of opinion whether it is desirable for the executive heads of institutions (i.e. vice-chancellors of universities, or principals or directors of CAEs) to be members of co-ordinating agencies. Such representation clearly provides useful expertise. Further, if all executive heads within a system are included on the board or council it is sometimes possible to settle various problems around the conference table, and certainly communication between institutions is improved. On the other hand, some would argue that if a principal or vice-chancellor is a member of a co-ordinating agency, he is placed in an unenviable situation as far as the interests of his own institution are concerned; as executive head it is his duty to do as well as he can to advance the interests of his own institution, whereas any co-ordinating agency needs to take a broader view. Then too, if some,but not all executive heads are represented,some institutions may have a substantial (and possibly some would say an unfair) advantage over other institutions with regard to access to information. This problem can be overcome by including all executive heads, but the evidence concerning the success of such boards is not encouraging; while there are some clear advantages, such boards are often reluctant to take hard decisions affecting one or more institutions. The British UGC tradition of including professors but not vice-chancellors as members - a tradition followed strictly over the years by the Australian Universities Commission - has quite a lot to commend it.

FUNCTIONS OF CO-ORDINATION

Our present post-secondary education co-ordinating agencies perform a variety of functions. Some are clearly specified for them in legislation, while others have been given to them by ministers, or have been accepted to meet perceived needs or at the request of colleges or universities. Briefly the main functions appear to be:

a) provision of advice to ministers and governments on needs and policies;
b) provision of advice, support and encouragement to individual institutions, particularly new and small institutions;
c) overall long-term planning to meet the higher education needs of society;
d) scrutiny of financial and academic proposals from institutions and (in the case of federal agencies) from states, and formulation of recommendations on the basis of these (This involves decisions on the allocation of funds between sectors, institutions, and programmes, and on the allocation of new programmes and functions between institutions);
e) approval and supervision of capital works projects;
f) course approval and accreditation;
g) programme review;
h) financial and administrative supervision (this sometimes involves controls over senior staff appointments, staff establishments, and conditions of employment);
i) special investigations, either self-initiated or carried out at the request of the minister;
j) collection and dissemination of statistical information; and
k) consultation with other bodies.

The precise functions carried out by any agency, of course, vary according to whether it operates at federal or state levels, and whether it has responsibility for one or more sectors of post-secondary education. The functions carried out by any agency in addition depend, as mentioned previously, on its formal responsibilities laid down by legislation or charter, and also by decisions made by that agency in the past.

The above long list of functions raises a number of issues. For example, which of the functions should have the highest priority at a

particular level of government? On the whole, it is probably true that, for good reasons, our co-ordinating agencies have tended to put most emphasis on short-term planning and management functions. Glenny and others, however, suggest that the key function for a co-ordinating agency should be long-term planning. With respect to the United States they write:

> Planning is the most important function of statewide co-ordination, for it provides the operational base and guidelines for which all other functions constitute implementing instruments... The quality of co-ordination itself reflects the quality and continuity of the planning effort.[31]

If planning is to be such a key function it is necessary that co-ordinating agencies have the appropriate resources to carry out this function. This means not only financial resources and access to information, but also highly imaginative and creative staff with a flair for the art of planning and highly sensitive to both academic needs and political realities. Are there other functions apart from planning that could possibly be given greater emphasis today? One possibility is programme review. In New York State, for instance, authorities are engaged in a long-term thorough review of doctoral programmes, concentrating on a small number of disciplines each year. Here possibly the main need is for review of undergraduate programmes in both universities and CAEs. With the rather dismal future prospects both with regard to funding and enrolments, one clear need appears to be to look carefully at courses in all fields, and particularly where enrolments are declining or where costs are far higher than average.

SOME OTHER PROBLEMS

Three other problems deserve special mention. They are the character of relations between co-ordinating agencies on the one hand and colleges and universities on the other; staffing of co-ordinating agencies; and the relationship between co-ordination and the educational enterprise. Each of these will be dealt with separately.

(a) Relations between co-ordinating agencies and educational institutions

In any co-ordinated system of post-secondary education, some degree of tension and conflict between the co-ordinating agency and the educational institutions for which it has responsibilities is probably unavoidable.

31 Lyman A. Glenny et al., Coordinating Higher Education for the '70s, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, 1971, p. 25.

But it is desirable that such tension and conflict should be reduced to a minimum. Unfortunately, in some cases in this country at state level relations between boards and institutions (particularly CAEs) have left quite a bit to be desired. Here we cannot inquire in detail into the various causes or possible causes of such friction and strain. In most cases, there has been probably some degree of fault on both sides.

What can be done towards achieving the best possible relations between co-ordinating agencies and institutions. First, on both sides there needs to be a clear recognition that for post-secondary education to prosper in the current context there must be an effective partnership between institutions and government. Government and its agencies have a clear right and duty to participate in some of the substantive issues regarding higher education. College and university administrators and staff could often be more ready to recognise this. On the other hand, academics too have rights and responsibilities. In particular they have a right and responsibility to protect academic freedom and endeavour to secure the greatest degree of institutional autonomy that is possible, particularly in matters of procedural control. People in government and government agencies often do not recognise this fully, and tend at times to treat post-secondary educational institutions as any other government agency. Both sides then have rights and responsibilities, and if the system is to work well this has to be recognised on both sides. Neither side can push its rights and responsibilities to the limit, otherwise the other will be unnecessarily restricted and the enterprise of higher education will inevitably suffer. Only with co-operative attitudes on both sides and mutual trust can a system of co-ordination such as we have and need work smoothly and effectively.

A second area that needs attention in order to attempt to improve relations is the actual decision areas over which co-ordinating bodies exercise control or partial control. The essential problem is to determine which interferences by the state constitute necessary safeguards of the public interest and to the interests of colleges and universities generally. In general I consider that the onus should be on governments and their agencies to show that each particular interference is necessary in order to safeguard public interest and achieve the goals of the higher or college

education system as a whole. From time to time it seems desirable that there should be some reassessment of areas of government interferences in colleges and universities. Now that the CAE system has developed considerably some controls on it could possibly be abandoned, while others could well be modified. Still again other areas which are not controlled at present may require government interference. In the United States it has been found in a number of states that detailed administrative and financial controls are often 'a hindrance to good management and good higher education than a necessary safeguard to the public interest'.[32] Many students of higher education there consider that the financial and administrative controls on colleges and universities beyond required post-audit of appropriated funds should be no more than demonstrably necessary for good state budget practices and collection of statistics. Berdahl supports this view and writes:

> According to modern theories of good administrative practices, the officials responsible should be delegated maximum power and resources to carry out policies and then held strictly accountable after the fact. If such broad administrative discretion leads to an occasional instance of institutional mismanagement, the answer...is not to abrogate the discretion but to replace the administrators. Presidents have no tenure and trustees have limited terms. But...the higher quality of the administrator...attracted by an institution which has been given room for 'creative administration' will more than compensate for the isolated case of mismanagement.[33]

In the Australian CAE sector administrative and financial controls are one area that appear to require re-assessment. Another is the control that some co-ordinating agencies have over the appointment of principals and senior academic staff.

A third area where changes might be made to improve relations is the mechanisms of co-ordination. Ideally the mechanisms should be so structured to facilitate the maximum degree of personal contact between persons on both sides, and to encourage co-operation. They also should be structured to achieve effective communication and understanding. Some state agencies have established regular newsletters to inform institutions of decisions made, and of other developments. But perhaps more could be done to improve communications. Possibly the actual agendas and minutes of meetings could

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32 Berdahl, p. 10.

33 Berdahl, p. 11.

be made available to institutions. Perhaps principals or vice-chancellors could be allowed to attend meetings as observers. Perhaps communication from colleges or agencies could be improved with a principals' advisory council to the state board. Perhaps better understandings could be achieved by secondment of administrative staff from colleges and universities to co-ordinating bodies and vice-versa. Finally, possibly more could be done to achieve effective co-ordination through providing incentives, and encouraging colleges and universities within state systems to co-operate to devise appropriate solutions to some particular identified problem.

(b) Staffing

One major problem for any co-ordinating agency is to secure and retain high quality staff with appropriate skills. This includes staff at various levels from that of full-time chairman down.

This problem is one that appears to face co-ordinating agencies in most Western countries. From the basis of a national study of statewide co-ordination in the United States, Berdahl reports:

> The importance of having an outstanding agency director and a highly qualified professional staff has been reiterated in the literature to the point of tedium. Yet our interviews in state after state revealed that acquiring and holding of competent staff is still a key problem for statutory co-ordinating agencies. Part of the difficulty is a matter of salaries and status; part of it is the scarcity of persons who combine political skill and educational knowledge and at the same time willing to work in a sensitive area which has no definite career ladder or training ground. 34

These words could well have been used to describe the Australian scene.

The particular problems which face Australian agencies need to be spelt out in some detail. First, senior staff posts require special skills and knowledge. Ideally a person appointed should have a good knowledge of higher education and of government, an ability to get on with others, a good political judgment, and specialised financial or other skills. These qualities are especially desirable for appointments to the post of full-time chairman. Yet persons with such qualities as outlined and willing to accept appointment are often in very short supply.

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34 Berdahl, p. 65.

Many vice-chancellors or CAE principals appear not to be willing to leave their posts to head a co-ordinating agency. Second, there is sometimes a problem with regard to salary levels and public service rules. This applies mainly to middle level appointments. Frequently good staff cannot be attracted because the level of appointment and salary is too low. A related problem is that the status and salaries of middle level agency officers are sometimes considerably below that of the college and university administrative staff with whom they deal frequently. This can cause problems. Third, for some agency staff career expectations are a problem. Possibly this could be solved by greater use of secondment of staff from universities or colleges, or by greater staff exchanges between agencies and institutions.

(c) Co-ordination and the educational enterprise

At times there is a tendency to think that the educational enterprise should be made to fit some particular administrative arrangement, and at times educational innovations are resisted because they threaten an existing administrative structure. Of course, in deciding whether some proposed innovation should be adopted it is desirable that administrative implications should be considered. At the same time, I suggest the rule of thumb should be that as far as possible administrative arrangements should fit the needs of the education enterprise, rather than the reverse.